



Phantom of the Open 106 min December 19, 2022

Never has there been a better time to delve into the story of Maurice Flitcroft, a British crane operator who became known as “Britain’s worst golfer.” And never has there been a better time to honour him onscreen.

Thankfully, that’s exactly what director Craig Roberts does with his dreamy and fantastical take on the man who tried tirelessly to qualify for the British Open despite never playing professional golf. (Or golf on a proper green, for that matter.) Sir Mark Rylance portrays Roberts with such warmth, sincerity and a flawless childlike naivety, it’s easy to root for the optimistic underdog – and even easier to understand why his wife Jean (whom Sally Hawkins embodies so tenderly) and the general public go on to stand by and celebrate him.

Of course, golf fans and readers of the biography on which this film is based know that due to not possessing the necessary (or any) skills, Flitcroft never realized his dreams of becoming a traditional golf pro. But that’s what makes this story so special: He may not have landed spectacularly amidst the elite onto which professional golf is built, but Flitcroft’s romance with big dreams and joy amidst bleakness is a reminder that there’s power and braveness in shooting for the stars.

A necessary escape from our own day-to-day grinds, *The Phantom of the Open* is a welcome reprieve from the belief that there’s an expiry date on becoming the people we hoped to be. Just be careful which golf clubs you break into.

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